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2603 NW 103 Ave.
Sunrise, FL 33322
July 2, 1996

RECEIVED
JUL 18 1996
FCC MAIL ROOM

Mr. William F. Caton
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M. Street, NW Room 222
Washington, DC 20554

Ref: CI Docket No. 95-55, Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM),
Amendment of the Commission's Rules Concerning the Inspection
of Radio Installations on Large Cargo and Small Passenger
Vessels.

Dear Mr. Caton:

Enclosed find 15 pages stapled and a USCG AMVER BULLETIN, issue No. 3-95 with added notes. Please note in particular a letter from the White House by Mr. James A. Dorskind dated March 27, 1996 and one from K.H. Keane Jr., Commander, U.S. Coast Guard dated May 29, 1996.

Although Congress passed and the President signed the Telecommunication Act of 1996 which included a little noticed and sparsely worded provision allowing the removal of Radio Officers if a vessel is properly GMDSS equipped and maintained, I contend that this does not relieve the FCC and the U.S Coast Guard from their primary responsibility of maintaining safety at sea re communications. Also, I do believe that there are many other Federal laws which are not enforced because they are wrong.

It is difficult to believe that the FCC and the USCG does not know that there are many large commercial ocean going vessels that are not GMDSS equipped and are relying on their Licensed Radio Officers to transmit distresses in morse code on 500 KHz; and conversly are standing watches on 500 KHz ready to respond to distresses by others; and will continue doing so until Feb. 1, 1999 ?

Considering how poorly GMDSS is functioning per the AMVER BULLETIN, its possible the World Organization may even extend the 2/1/99 deadline ? In fact prudent shipowners who are concerned for the safety of their crews, ships, cargos and the environment would logicly delay purchases until GMDSS proves its reliability and gets more respect from the Maritime Community, as they do for an SOS on 500 KH z. Would you buy a new model car when you know it is not performing safely as advertised ?

Continued

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Page 2

Mr. William F. Caton
Federal Communications Commission

July 2, 1996

Re the aforementioned March 27, 1996 letter from the White House, I do believe that President Clinton will review the matter of delaying implimentation. Therefore I urge both of you not to allow U.S. Flag, ocean going ships to remove their Radio Officers until you get definit word from the President or Mr. Dorskind, his Special Assistant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stanley Blumenthal". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Stanley Blumenthal, MREO

CC: Mr. James A. Dorskind, Commander K. Keane, Jr., Senators
Connie Mack, Bob Graham and Representative Peter Deutsch.

2603 NW 103 AVE
SUNRISE, FL 33322
FEBRUARY 12, 1996

PRESIDENT WILLIAM CLINTON
WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON D.C.

RECEIVED
FBI 8 1996
FCC MAIL ROOM

DEAR PRESIDENT CLINTON:

RE THE BELOW ITEM:

ARA PRESS, THE WEEKLY UNION NEWSPAPER OF THE SEA IS PREPARED
BY THE AMERICAN RADIO ASSOCIATION FOR ALL OUR SHIPMATES.

DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 1996

...CONGRESS PASSED THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996. AMONG THE
CHANGES IS AN AMENDMENT TO THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT EXEMPTING U.S.
FLAG SHIPS FROM HAVING A RADIO TELEGRAPH STATION OPERATED BY ONE
OR MORE RADIO OFFICERS. THE EXEMPTION DOES NOT TAKE EFFECT UNTIL
THE U.S. COAST GUARD DETERMINES THAT EACH VESSEL HAS THE GLOBAL
MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM INSTALLED AND OPERATING IN
GOOD WORKING CONDITION. IN REPORTING THE BILL OUT OF A SENATE/HOUSE
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE THE CONFEREES EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE
PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GMDSS AND THEREFORE SPECIFIED THAT
THE EXEMPTION SHALL ONLY TAKE EFFECT UPON THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S
DETERMINATION THAT THE SYSTEM IS FULLY INSTALLED, MAINTAINED AND
IS OPERATING PROPERLY ON EACH VESSEL. BT...

IF YOU BELIEVE IN CONFORMING TO THE LAW OF THE SEA THAT ALL SHIPS
COME TO THE AID OF EACH OTHER IN A DISTRESS SITUATION THEN YOU
MUST HAVE OUR COAST GUARD DETERMINE IF ALL SHIPS WORLD WIDE
ARE EQUALLY GMDSS EQUIPPED AND MAINTAINED. IF THEY ARE NOT HOW
WILL EACH KNOW TO GO TO THE AID OF THE OTHER ?

A FEW YEARS AGO A CONFERENCE OF WORLD NATIONS INCLUDING THE UNITED
STATES SET UP A PROGRAM ON THE TYPES OF GMDSS EQUIPMENT TO BE
INSTALLED ON A STEP BY STEP BASIS SO THAT ALL SHIPS WILL HAVE TIME
TO CONFORM BY SPECIFIED DEADLINES WITH THE FINAL FULL IMPLIMENTATION
SET FOR FEB. 1, 1999. ITS NOT THAT FAR OFF, WHY SHOULDN'T THE USA
RESPECT THAT DATE ?

CURRENTLY ALMOST ALL THE WORLDS COMMERCIAL, OCEAN GOING SHIPS HAVE
RADIO OFFICERS STANDING MORSE CODE WATCHES ON 500 KHZ, A TIME PROVEN
RELIABLE, COMMERCIAL & DISTRESS SYSTEM WITH NO FALSE ALARM PROBLEMS.

ALSO COMMERCIAL SHORE STATIONS SERVICING THE SEA GOING COMMUNITY
INCLUDING OUR OWN WLO, WNU, WCC, WSC, KFS, KPH, ETC ARE REQUIRED BY
LAW TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SAFETY SYSTEM. AS A WORKING RADIO
OFFICER I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THERE IS STILL PLENTY OF TRAFFIC ON
500 KHZ. FOR THE UNITED STATES TO DROP OUT OF AN INTERNATIONAL
COMMERCIAL AND SAFETY SYSTEM BEFORE ITS ENDING DATE IS IMMORAL, PUTS
BOTH KINDS OF EQUIPPED SHIPS AT RISK, WILL SURELY INFURIATE THE
MARITIME COMMUNITY AND COULD LEAD TO A TRAGIC EMBARRASSMENT.

CONSIDER THAT ON NOV. 28, 1995, 1505 UTC THE M/V SAVANNAH 1/HOFZ A PANAMANIAN REGISTERED VESSEL SENT OUT A STANDARD AUTO ALARM SIGNAL FOLLOWED BY AN SOS IN MORSE CODE ON 500 KHZ WHICH WAS COPIED BY THE R/O'S ON 4 NEARBY SHIPS, THE M/T ALLEGRA, M/T VANDOU, S.S. BRAZILIAN REEFER AND A RUSSIAN VESSEL. CALL LETTERS UCVK, NO NAME GIVEN. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE SAVANNAH 1 WAS UNABLE TO START ITS MAIN ENGINE AS THEY HAD LOST ALL COMPRESSED AIR PLUS THEY COULD ONLY COMMUNICATE BY MORSE CODE/500 KHZ AND VHF WHICH HAS A RANGE OF ONLY ABOUT 30 MILES. THE BRAZILLIAN REEFER CONTACTED THE DISTRESSED VESSEL'S OWNER, TRADEWIND SAN FRANCISCO FOR SPARE PARTS AND TUGBOATS AND THE DISTRESS WAS CANCELLED. IF NOT FOR THE R/O'S, WHO KNOWS HOW LONG IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD IN THE WATER AT THE MERCY OF THE ELEMENTS ? SUPPOSE THE SAVANNAH 1 WAS SINKING OR ON FIRE OR ABANDOND OR A CREW MEMBER NEEDED URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION ? TIME IS A FACTOR AND THE NEAREST VESSEL COULD BE ON THE OTHER SYSTEM.

NOTE: TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE THE M/V SAVANNAH 1 INCIDENT WAS NOT REPORTED BY THE USA NEWS MEDIA ALTHOUGH I TRIED TO GET THEM TO.

REMEMBER THE 1912 TITANIC WHERE THE SS CALIFORNIA SAILED BY CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE ITS FLARES BUT THINKING THEY WERE PARTY FIREWORKS BECAUSE THE CAPTAIN DID NOT HAVE A DISTRESS MESSAGE IN HIS HAND.

I AM ALSO PROTESTING THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS AMENDMENT/MODIFICATION OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT I SAW YOU SIGN ON TV WAS SNEAKED IN AT THE LAST MINUTE DENYING US SEAFARERS & OUR REPS AND I SUSPECT EVEN THE VOTING SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS OUR/THEIR VIEWS ON A MATTER OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SAFETY AT SEA. IT IS UNRELATED TO THE BILL PASSED AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED AS A SEPERATE BILL. ITS A CERTAINTY THAT THE CONFEREES WERENT INFORMED OF THE WORLD'S FEB 1, 1999 FULL GMDSS IMPLIMENTATION DATE ELSE THE AMENDMENT/MODIFICATION WOULDNT HAVE PASSED.

EVEN WHEN ALL VESSELS ARE GMDSS EQUIPPED THERE WILL BE INEVITABLE BREAKDOWNS GIVEN THE HOSTILE MARINE ENVIORMENT. A TRAINED MARITIME ELECTRONIC SPECIALIST AT SEA CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE & DEATH, SALVAGE OF SHIP & CARGO AND PREVENTION OF POLUTION.

IN CONCLUSION THE BUCK HAS BEEN PASSED TO YOURSELF AND THE U.S. COAST GUARD ON WHETHER TO ALLOW U.S. FLAG SHIPS TO SAIL THE OCEANS WITH OR WITHOUT RADIO ELECTRONIC OFFICERS. I URGE BOTH OF YOU NOT TO RISK A 2ND LACK OF COMMUNICATION TYPE OF TITANIC DISASTER OR ONE CAUSED BY A FIXABLE MALFUNCTION NOT FIXED.

SINCERLY

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL
MASTER RADIO ELECTRONIC OFFICER
S.S. LEADER

CC: U.S. COAST GUARD COMMANDANT, REP. PETER DEUTSCH, SENATORS CONNIE MACK AND BOB GRAHAM AND AS SOON AS I CAN FIND OUT THEIR NAMES, ALL THOSE AT THAT JOINT CONFERENCE, ESPECIALLY THE ONE(S) WHO INTRODUCED THIS AMENDMENT SO WE CAN FIND OUT WHO REQUESTED IT ?

2603 NW 103 AVE.
SUNRISE, FL 33322
FEB. 27, 1996

THE HON. SENATOR & REP. WHO INTRODUCED THE AMENDMENT INDICATED.
U.S. SENATE/HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASH. DC 20515/20510

DEAR SENATOR/U.S. REPRESENTATIVE (I DO NOT KNOW WHO YOU ARE)

AS A U.S. CITIZEN, WORLD WAR II MERCHANT MARINE VET, UNION MEMBER AND SEA GOING RADIO OFFICER, RE THE ENCLOSED COPY OF MY FEB. 12TH LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, WOULD YOU KINDLY RESPOND TO THE POINTS RAISED IN IT PLUS THE ADDITIONAL ONES BELOW, CONSIDERING YOU AND SEN/REP CHOSE TO INTRODUCE THE AMENDMENT/MODIFICATION IN QUESTION:

1. WHO REQUESTED IT AND/OR HOW DID IT COME ABOUT ?
2. WERE YOU AWARE AND IF SO DID YOU INFORM THE OTHER CONFEREES THAT THERE WAS A WORLD WIDE AGREEMENT THAT THE FULL GMDSS IMPLIMENTATION DATE WAS SET FOR FEB. 1, 1999 ? IF AWARE WHY WASNT YOUR EXEMPTION MADE TO COINCIDE WITH IT ?
3. DID YOU SEE THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S "AMVER BULLETIN" ISSUE NBR. 3-95 WHICH DEALS EXTENSIVELY WITH THE FALSE ALERT PROBLEMS THE GMDSS SYSTEM IS PLAGUED WITH - TO THE POINT THAT VESSELS ARE NOT ANSWERING DISTRESS CALLS AND HAVE POSSIBLY SHUT DOWN SOME OF THEIR COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT (P. 20) ? PLEASE CONTACT RICHARD T. KENNY, MARITIME RELATIONS OFFICER 212-668-7764/62.
4. WAS ANY RESEARCH DONE SUCH AS FINDING OUT HOW MANY OCEAN GOING VESSELS HAVE R/O'S STANDING MORSE CODE, 500 KHZ WATCHES, HOW MUCH COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC OUR COAST STATIONS HANDLE ON 500 KHZ, INVITING INPUT FROM THE MARITIME UNIONS, INSURANCE COMPANIES, SHIPOWNERS WORLD WIDE (ITS EFFECT IS NOT JUST DOMESTIC) AND ENVIRONMENTALIST REPRESENTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST ?
5. CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THE RESENTMENT & POSSIBLE RELUCTANCE OF A MASTER OF A VESSEL HAVING AN R/O TO DIVERT (A COSTLY MATTER) IN RESPONSE TO A DISTRESS CALL FROM A SHIP HE KNOWS DOES NOT HAVE AN R/O TO HEAR HIS DISTRESS CALL SHOULD HE HAVE TO SEND ONE ON 500 KHZ ? NOTE THAT MANY SHIPS ARE PARTIALLY AND EVEN FULLY GMDSS EQUIPPED AND STILL HAVE RADIO ELECTRONIC OFFICERS (REO'S) MONITORING 500 KHZ & MAINTAINING EQUIPMENT.

6. ANY NEW PRODUCT OR SYSTEM (GMDSS IS BOTH) REQUIRES A BREAK-IN PERIOD BEFORE IT CAN BE CONSIDERED RELIABLE AND EVEN THEN MUST BE ACCEPTED AND EQUIPPED BY ALL TO BE FULLY VIABLE. WHY NOT CONTINUE TO HAVE BOTH UNTIL THE NEW ONE PROVES ITSELF WORTHY ENOUGH TO PHASE OUT THE OLD ? CURRENTLY I WOULD SAY THAT A VESSEL SENDING AN SOS ON NO FALSE ALARM 500 KHZ CAN EXPECT MORE RESPECT & MORE SHIPS RESPONDING THEN IF SENT VIA TROUBLED, NOT FULLY REQUIRED UNTIL FEB. 1, 1999, GMDSS.
7. WHO WILL GAIN FROM THIS PREMATURE CHANGE ? A FEW PENNY WISE USA SHIPOWNERS WHO MAY WELL LOSE A LOT MORE THEN THEY SAVED SHOULD ONE OF THEIR VESSELS BECOME INVOLVED IN A DISASTER WITHOUT A QUALIFIED REO ABOARD. LIVES, PROPERTY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE CREDITABILTY OF THE USA AS AN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATING, SAFETY MINDED NATION ARE ALL PUT AT RISK BY YOUR SPARSLY WORDED, LITTLE NOTICED, UNPUBLICIZED AMENDMENT. GIVEN MURPHY'S LAW AN INCIDENT SUCH AS THE SS CALIFORNIA SAILING PAST THE TITANIC COULD MAKE WORLD HEADLINES TO OUR DISGRACE. ISNT IT COMMON SENSE TO COMPLY WITH A COMMON IMPLIMENTATION DATE FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL IN A GLOBAL OR ANY SAFETY SYSTEM ?
8. MAY I RESPECTFULLY URGE THOSE OF YOU WHO AGREE TO SO INFORM PRESIDENT CLINTON AND THE COMMANDER OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD.

A RESPONSE(S) WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

SINCERLY

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL, MREO
S.S LEADER

CC: PRESIDENT CLINTON, JOINT CONFEREES - SENATORS PRESSLER, STEVENS
McCAIN, BURNS, GORTON, LOTT, HOLLINGS, INOUE, FORD, EXXON AND
ROCKEFELLER - REPRESENTATIVES BLILEY, FIELDS, OXLEY, WHITE,
DINGELL, MARKEY, BOUCHER, ESHOO, AND RUSH. USCG COMMANDANT, MY
SENATORS CONNIE MACK, BOB GRAHAM & REP. PETER DEUTSCH AND
OTHERS.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 27, 1996

Mr. Stanley Blumenthal
2603 Northwest 103rd Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33322

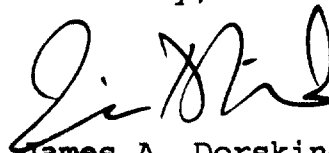
Dear Mr. Blumenthal

Thank you so much for your letter. President Clinton greatly appreciates the trust and confidence you have shown in him by writing.

To ensure that your concerns are addressed, I am forwarding your letter to the Department of Transportation for review and any appropriate action. Please bear in mind that it may take some time to look thoroughly into the issues you have raised. Should you wish to contact the Department of Transportation directly, you may write to: Department of Transportation, 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, D C. 20590.

Many thanks for your patience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. A. Dorskind', written in a cursive style.

James A. Dorskind
Special Assistant to the President
Director of Correspondence and
Presidential Messages

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**United States
Coast Guard**



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

Washington, D.C. 20593-0001
Staff Symbol: (G-MCO-2)
Phone: (202) 267-1464

5730

APR 12 1996

Mr. Stanley Blumenthal
2603 NW 103 Avenue
Sunrise, FL 33322

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

On behalf of President Clinton, I am responding to your letter of February 12, 1996, concerning the provision of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 that exempts U.S. flag ships from being equipped with a radio telegraphy station if the ship meets the requirements for a Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).

As you mentioned in your letter, the requirement for a manual Morse code radiotelegraph station was contained in the Communications Act of 1934 and primarily resulted from the sinking of the TITANIC in 1912. After more than 50 years of technology advancement, in 1988 the international maritime community, through amendments to the International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea (SOLAS), agreed to replace the required manual system with the GMDSS. So far, at least 66 countries in the global maritime community have adopted GMDSS.

As you know, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 removed the statutorily-imposed requirement for a manual safety system for those vessels having installed GMDSS. By removing the requirement for redundant systems, U.S. flagged vessels will no longer have the additional economic disadvantage caused by having to maintain an automated and manual distress system.

Finally, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) will continue to inspect each vessel with an installed GMDSS and issue a Certificate of Compliance. The U.S. Coast Guard will rely on these FCC inspections and issued certificates to attest to the proper installation of the GMDSS and to ascertain the requirements for trained operators. Ensured reliability of the equipment through technical support contracts or redundant systems will also be specified by the FCC. Coast Guard inspectors will spot check equipment during boardings to ensure it will function as certificated by the FCC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. E. Schinner".

J. E. SCHRINNER
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief, Compliance Division
By direction of the Commandant

2603 NW 103 Ave.
Sunrise, FL 33322
April 23, 1996

J.E. Schrinner
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief, Compliance Division
Washington, D.C. 20593-0001

Dear Captain Schrinner:

Re your APR 12 1996 letter on behalf of President Clinton, enclosed please find copies of 3 other letters dated Feb. 27, March 2, 1996 and one APR 2 1993 to The Honorable Connie Mack from John W. Whitehouse, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard, Deputy Chief, Congressional Staff.

Sorry to say that nowhere in your letter do you respond to my bottom line request that the implimentation of the newly passed U.S. law be delayed until the Feb. 1, 1999 international agreed upon switch-over date so as to maintain continuously the law of the sea that ships come to each others aid when one sends out a distress signal.

Additionally you did not respond to the mentioned serious problems the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) is currently experiencing as extensively reported in your 'AMVER Bulletin Nbr. 3 - 95' further supporting the view that it is in the best interest of Safety At Sea to continue with the 500 KHz system while GMDSS corrects its imperfections.

Furthermore by not honoring the 2/1/99 date the Honorable Connie Mack and the world was missled by Commander Whitehouse attempting to justify the U.S.C.G. discontinuing their 500 KHz participation on August 1, 1993 partly by assuring all of us as he did in the 3rd paragraph of his APR 2 1993 letter a copy of which is enclosed as mentioned earlier. Noted too is that the USCG not monitoring 500 was used as an argument to pass this new law. This is not a clean way to legislate.

Also in Commander Whitehouse's letter on the 2nd page, "Incidently, only six distress alerts were reported to the Coast Guard in 1992 from ships using 500 KHz." Sluffing off 6 distresses which were not false alarms does not speak well for the otherwise fine reputation of the USCG. The Titanic, Exxon Valdez, Achille lauro, Salvadore Allends, etc. etc. are all single distresses and shouldnt be labeled 'only'. Consider if the Commander, you or I were on them ?

As for your statement that at least 66 countries in the Global Maritime Community have adopted GMDSS:

1. Way more significant is the other side, how many countries & ships are still on the 500 KHz system whose distress calls wont be heard by ships not having Radio Officers & visa versa wont be responding to ships not sending their distresses on 500, making the seas more dangerous to both groups.

(continued)

Capt. Schrinner, USCG

2. 66 or more wrongs do not make a right. Actually I applaud ships adopting GMDSS early but the real question is do you know how many have taken off their R.O.'S ? Its not a case of one or the other, you must run with both till the switch-over date assuming the new GMDSS system worked out its bugs by then ?

Re your statement in the 3rd paragraph as to U.S. flagged vessels will no longer have the additional economic disadvantage caused by having to maintain automated and manual distress systems. The main cost would be the Radio Officer. Please note we are the most qualified and do the maintainence and repairs of Radars and other electronic equipment at sea when it counts most and could save the shipowners millions considering the value of lives, ships, cargos and environment. Once modest me was credited by the Chief Engineer of the SS Ultrasea of saving its boilers when I repaired a saline alarm which wouldnt stop alarming so they had to turn it off. Afterwards there was a true alarm indicating there was too much salt in the boiler water which they corrected before it corroded hundreds of boiler tubes which would have disabled the engine. My union, ARA has files full of repair incidents which we are encouraged to report to them on forms for that purpose

In conclusion I am looking foward to your 2nd response.

Sincerely

Stanley Blumenthal, MREO

CC: James A. Dorskind, Special Assistant to the President, Senator Breaux, all the Senators and Represenatives listed in my Feb. 27, 1996 letter and various other people.

Note: I am also sending copies of AMVER Bulletin issue 3 - 95.

U.S. Department
of Transportation

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
U. S. Coast Guard

2100 Second Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20593-0001
Staff Symbol: G-CC/104
Phone: (202) 366-4280

HB
yi

FORT MYERS
APR 06 1993

5730

APR 2 1993

The Honorable Connie Mack
United States Senate
1342 Colonial Boulevard, Suite 27
Fort Myers, FL 33907

Dear Senator Mack:

This letter is in response to your letter of February 23, 1993, on behalf of Mr. Stanley Blumenthal, Radio Officer aboard the S/T MORMACSUN concerning the Coast Guard's planned action to discontinue watchkeeping on the distress frequency 500 kilohertz (kHz). Mr. Blumenthal expressed concern about: 1) distress alerting communications prior to full implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS); 2) announcing a decision before seeking comments; 3) the savings realized and, 4) the safety of human lives and personal property at sea. We want to assure you, and Mr. Blumenthal, that the Coast Guard intends to continue to provide the highest level of communication services to the maritime community.

On August 1, 1993, we plan to discontinue watchkeeping on 500 kHz on all Coast Guard cutters and at all Coast Guard communication stations as a step toward full implementation of GMDSS. GMDSS will provide the mariner several options for initiating and relaying distress alerts, and passing and receiving maritime safety information. For distress alerts and telecommunications, options include: INMARSAT satellite; radio telex; MF/HF single sideband radiotelephone; VHF-FM radiotelephone; and satellite emergency position indicating radiobeacons (EPIRB). Options for receiving maritime safety information broadcasts include: INMARSAT SafetyNet, Navigational Warning System (NAVTEX); and, HF radio telex. Basic GMDSS equipment designed for distress alerts and safety broadcasts will be required on SOLAS ships by August 1, 1993. Non-SOLAS vessels will continue to use the same distress and safety services provided for SOLAS vessels. This may require some non-SOLAS vessels to purchase GMDSS compatible equipment.

Watchkeeping on 500 kHz will remain mandatory for all merchant ships and public coast stations working in the medium frequency band until GMDSS is fully implemented on February 1, 1999. This means that a ship having only a Morse radio system can still send or relay a distress alert on 500 kHz. Merchant ships or public coast stations copying the distress alert will continue to relay all pertinent information about the case to the appropriate Coast Guard facility for search and rescue prosecution. On scene communications will be on voice systems, while homing devices required on each ship will help to determine the location of the

Subj: Response to Senator Mack's letter dated February 23, 1993
concerning Mr. Stanley Blumenthal

ship in distress. Incidentally, only six distress alerts were reported to the Coast Guard in 1992 from ships using 500 kHz.

In mid-January 1993, we published a Notice of Intent soliciting comments from the maritime public. The notice was published as a Notice to Mariners and in the Federal Register [CGD 92-078]. We have also discussed this matter with foreign coast guards and international maritime agencies. We will defer discontinuance of 500 kHz if the comments received so warrant. Our plans are not irrevocable.

However, we must make intelligent investment decisions now to maintain pace with the rapidly changing, new technological advances in maritime communications. The Coast Guard can no longer justify the resources expended to guard the medium frequency band used for maritime communications when other facilities are available. One twenty-four hour 500 kHz watch section for all seven communication stations requires a total of twenty-three dedicated people. Supporting 500 kHz is not an effective use of resources in view of other communications capabilities discussed previously.

The concern for safety of life and the protection of personal property at sea has always and will remain paramount to the Coast Guard. Although we will make the transition to new, more efficient, dependable and reliable communications systems, we intend to continue to provide the best possible service to the maritime community.

Sincerely,

JOHN W. WHITEHOUSE
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard
Deputy Chief, Congressional Affairs Staff

Enclosure

U.S. Department
of Transportation

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

Washington, D.C. 20593-0001
Staff Symbol: (G-MOC)
Phone: (202) 267-2978

MAY 29 1996

5730

Mr. Stanley Blumenthal
2603 NW 103 Avenue
Sunrise, FL 33322

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

In response to your letter to Captain Schrinner, dated April 23, 1996, we regret that our position concerning implementation of GMDSS was not communicated clearly.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 removed the requirement for a radio officer where a properly installed GMDSS is operating. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) inspects installations of GMDSS and, if properly installed and appropriately maintained, will issue a Certificate of Compliance. The Coast Guard accepts the Certificate of Compliance as evidence that an installed GMDSS on a particular vessel meets the intent of the Telecommunications Act and we eliminate the requirement for a radio officer on the manning specifications of the Certificate of Inspection. This is in accordance with the law.

You ask the Coast Guard to delay implementation of the Telecommunications Act until February 1, 1999. The Coast Guard does not have this option where a vessel is in compliance with the provisions of the Act.

Thank you for expressing your concerns.

Sincerely,

K. KEANE, JR.
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard
Office of Compliance
By direction of the Commandant

2603 NW 103 Ave.
Sunrise, FL 33322
June 4, 1996

President William Clinton
C/O James A. Dorskind
Special Assistant to the President
Director of Correspondence and
Presidential Messages
The White House
Washington D.C.

Dear President Clinton:

Re the enclosed copy of the May 29, 1996 letter from Commander K. Keane, Jr., Commander U.S. Coast Guard it is clear that the 'Buck' has been passed to yourself.

When considering all the facts contained in my correspondence and documents, copies of which Mr. Dorskind should have relating to this matter, I believe you will agree that Congress and yourself like all of us mortals made a mistake which in this case is correctable, ie; If there is a will, there is a way ?

In addition to the information already sent please be informed that a Mr. Curt Fauver, manager of Marine Coast Station WLO, 1-800-633-1312, told me that they average 120 to 150 messages a day from ships in Morse Code and a Mr. Tim Gorman, manager of Globe Wireless, 415-726-6588, stations KFS & WNU does even more in morse code from ships.

Factoring in all the stations from all over the world makes it that more imperative to continue requiring the 500 KHz Morse Code watch on U.S. ships to maintain the wonderful cooperative safety law of the sea till the Feb. 1, 1999 international switchover date.

Enough said.

Thanking you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely

Stanley Blumenthal

2603 NW 103 Ave.
Sunrise, FL 33322
June 28, 1996

President William Clinton
C/O James A. Dorskind
Special Assistant to the President
Director of Correspondence and Presidential Messages
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear President Clinton:

The two enclosed, 'Letters To The Editor' pages are from the latest U.S. Coast Guard's AMVER BULLETIN number 1-96.

As you can see, I am not the only active Radio Officer that recognizes the grave danger in removing licensed, Morse Code capable, specialized technicians off U.S. flag ships before the full implimentation of the Global Maritime Distress Safety System set for Feb. 1, 1999.

This is being typed in Scottsdale, Arizona where I am taking a union run re-fresher course on Advanced Radar along with four other brothers. We take our profession much more seriously then anyone else on the ships who are burdend with their own specialized duties.

Instructors who teach Captains and other Officers to pass the GMDSS license exams are reporting that their students are reluctant to take on the communications as it could interfere with their normal duties in an emergency; and they certainly dont want to attempt to repair thousands of dollars of vital electronic equipment they know so little about, BUT they feel pressured to get the licenses to keep or get jobs. A marine environment can be very hostile and rescue personnel, equipment and servicemen are not usually just around the corner.

Also note the letter from S. Rang, the Master of the "M/V OMI SACRAMENTO". Normally, R.O.s copy weather faxes which all Masters and Mates want.

Hopefully, this additional info will help you or someone from your staff in ultimately responding to my June 4, 1996 letter.

Again, I thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Stanley Blumenthal, NREO

The following Radio Officer schoolmates endorse the intent of this letter:

Harry Dunbar
David A. Olson
Arthur X. Jensen
Kevin D. Kelly

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

He questions the wisdom.....

Dear Editor,

As a sea-going Radio Officer employed with different shipping companies, I often join a vessel where either there is no current AMVER Bulletin onboard or the existing one is outdated.

Since I receive my mail regularly from home (Windsor, Nova Scotia), I would kindly request that you send me the AMVER Bulletin on a regular basis in order that I may never be without the latest AMVER information when joining a vessel.

For your information, this November I will have been a Radio Officer for 28 years and all throughout those years I must have sent nearly a thousand AMVER messages. I do not think that this is a record but it certainly is an awful lot. And would you believe, not one was sent in a mode other than Morse Code. It is a shame that the U.S. Coast Guard closed down the High-Frequency Radio-telegraphy facilities at its three largest coast stations (NMN, NMC and NMO). Not all vessels have the modern communications packages which IMO would like to see on all vessels. Personally, I have not talked to a USCG station ever since the radio-telegraphy service ceased. Almost all my AMVERs are routed via Canadian Coast Guard Radio Station Halifax/VCS in Morse, or, if out of range of VCS, any other radio-telegraphy station which accepts AMVERs free-of-charge. I also continue to monitor 500kHz in Morse as it is still being used by many ships. I still cannot understand the decision by the U.S. Coast Guard to stop monitoring this international distress frequency BEFORE the full implementation of the Global Maritime Distress & Safety System on Feb 1, 1999! It seems that the U.S. Coast Guard, whom I recognized as being one of the most responsible bodies in the world when it comes to ensuring Safety Of Life At Sea, has now failed the marine community by removing itself from a serious responsibility.

If this letter is highly critical of the U.S. Coast Guard, it is because I have based my whole career on the principle that seafarers should feel, if indeed they come to be in a distress situation, help from the nearest vessel is only a call away directly from one ship to the other. Somewhere, someone failed to see that a well-proven method of alerting and communicating regardless of language barriers and/or atmospheric conditions, i.e. Morse Code on 500kHz, should be part of the GMDSS, not excluded from it. But most assuredly, it should never have been shelved before full implementation of a new system when this system is encountering so many problems such as the extremely high rate of false alarms from EPIRBs which has had the effect on the mariner to ignore messages

announcing alarms having been picked up by satellites! I know many ship Masters over the past 4 to 5 years who have treated these messages with total aloofness! It is indeed a sad situation and there is no reason for these false alarms to be occurring other than the fact that radio-communications are now mostly in the hands of non-professional communicators who do not know what they are doing or are simply abusing the alerting system. Lets hope that one day we do not see a major tragedy at sea which could have been avoided had there been a professional communicator onboard.

I hope my comments have not shocked you too much. I simply tell it as I see it! I also hope that this letter did not deter you from sending me the AMVER Bulletins. Maybe I have left you for some food for thought in the way that the U.S. Coast Guard should be dealing with safety of life at sea. With all due respect, I remain,

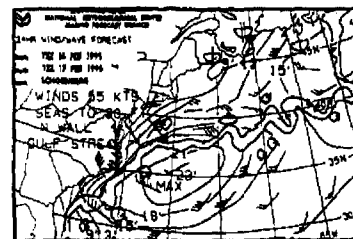
Yours very truly,

Paul Du Mesnil, Radio Officer

The fax of the matter is.....

Dear Editor,

We are writing this letter to express our concern and alarm over the impending plan to terminate the distribution of Weather Facsimile service by NOAA to communications outlets serving the U.S. Merchant Marine — this at the very time our survival as an industry is at stake.



This information was received recently from WLO Radio, while we were discharging cargo at Rio de Janeiro. "WLO" provides world-wide communications to the maritime community from Mobile Alabama. And, we have benefited from NOAA's timely Weather FAX service from them and other U.S. Coastal Stations in our world-wide charters.

As you may be aware, the "AMVER Bulletin," published by Department of Transportation, U.S. Coast Guard, is dedicated to "The Pursuit of Safety at Sea." In that pursuit, Mariners Weather Log continually updates NOAA's part in that common endeavor. "...The National Ocean Service of NOAA produces the nautical and aeronautical charts that guide travelers in the sea and air." "...NOAA, Suppliers of Vital Weather and Ocean Information." Among your numerous and diverse services, this one effects us directly.

We humbly appeal to you to reconsider this drastic action which could endanger our lives and the lives of

many at sea. We use your timely weather maps, daily, as a principal planning tool in navigating this vessel. We ask that you use this letter, along with others you may have, to petition the Congress for the necessary funding for the continuance of Weather FAX feeds to coastal stations serving ship's at sea.

We thank you for giving serious thought to this serious matter. Your help is needed now to restore that great adjunct to safety at sea: timely weather facsimile feeds to radio stations serving the maritime community.

Very sincerely,

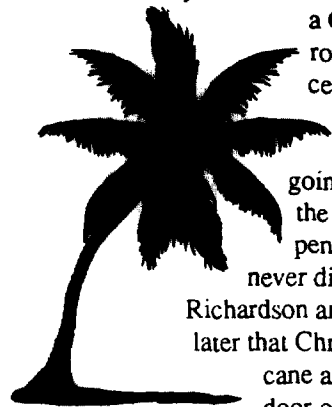
S. Rang

Master, M/V OMI Sacramento

Thinking out loud....of Bora Bora!.....

Hi YA All

At this time last year the S/L ANTARCTIC was on her way to Gaeta, Italy and the 1st Mate provided a Christmas tree in the dining room, suspended from the ceiling. When the crossing of the Atlantic was taking place I swore that I was going to get a shot of the tree at the thirty degree angle suspended from the ceiling, but never did. Captain Ernest Richardson and Chief Mate Dave Eddy later that Christmas eve placed a candy cane and bar of chocolate at the door of every member of the crew.



It was all very nice and I expect anyone who was spending their first Christmas away from home will always remember the gift and the provider. I remember my first time away from Christmas was in Nancy, France. The Christmas party was proceeding very nicely at the O club, when the French electrical workers went on strike and left the base of Toul Rosiere without power. That was in 1954. I swore I would never spend New Years Day in France and took off for Munich for the New Year. Forty years later they are doing the same thing!

Since that period I did some vacation relief on a tanker on the East coast for a couple of months. I taught GMDSS and SART system on board and operated with only a couple of distress alarms. One day I was doing a required check out of the MF transmitter on 500kHz and unable to raise WLO or WNU. Who came in but a Cuban station on the eastern shore area? We had a short QSO. One begins to feel for these guys on the brass key, the only means they have for communication. If the Congress passes the Telecommunications Act, it will be so long from the American side to the radio world. The Russians and the rest of the Third World countries will still be communicating and shipping to Cuba, our next door neighbor.

I had one incident near the Houston ship channel

worth mentioning. About 0230 I was on the bridge ready to transmit our arrival time at the sea buoy, when a distress call came over the VHF radio. It was a crew boat sinking and only had the GPS for position reports. A larger supply boat picked up the call and tried to locate the small crew boat with six souls on board. The captain was getting frantic because he could see all the supply ships but did not know which one he was talking to. The crew boat was taking on water and the engine was dead. Finally the supply vessel stated that he would turn on all his lights and offer a beacon to the sinking crew boat. The distressed captain yelled out that he was right behind the supply boat. They took the people on board and waited until daybreak to transfer the passengers to a fishing boat that was also along side. Anyone operating a boat or on board as a passenger would be crazy not to depart any dock with an Emergency Position-indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) device. The EPIRB now only costs a few hundred dollars. Don't forget to ask the captain if he has one on board.

After spending the Christmas and New Years with the family at Lake Tahoe and San Francisco I hope to get a ship. I would like to get to the Far East since I have never been there. Along with Singapore and Bora Bora!

It's now time to wish all of you a very safe and holy Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family,

Best regards

Sparks

Thomas J. O'Brien AC4HW

Dear Editor:

As per page 9 of your revised manual (3-94), must coastal be spelled out on the L-lines or can it be abbreviated to "CO" as Rhumb Line and great circle are to "RL" and "CG"?

Kindly respond to the above address so that the 2nd Mate, who makes out the sailing plans and myself - the radio officer who sends it, knows if it can be done.

If it can be abbreviated, I think you should indicate it in your next updated manual.

Thank you in advance for your clarification.

Sincerely,

Stanley Blumenthal, MREO

Master Radio Electronics Officer

S/S LEADER

•Stan - The computer gurus in Martinsburg, W.Va. checked and advised that the AMVER mainframe computer will accept "CO" to indicate the Coastal method of navigation. We'll also take your suggestion to publish this information in the next revision to the AMVER User Manual — Anything to make our AMVER reports more "user friendly."

Thanks and a tip of the hat!

—Editor

See pages 4, 5, 17 thru 31, 34, 36, 37 and 38.
B.B.

AMVER

Bulletin

The Official Publication of the AMVER Safety Network

ISSUE NUMBER 3-95



A Royal Endorsement:
Monaco's Prince Albert
Hosts AMVER Awards

Royal Recognition: Prince Albert of Monaco presents AMVER Awards at a special ceremony



The Principality of Monaco provided the setting for the presentation of AMVER Awards to shipping companies of Monaco, France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. Prince Albert joined U.S. Coast Guard Chief of Staff VADM Kent Williams in honoring the participating companies.

Also in this issue...

— *Chinese Officials study AMVER firsthand as ships of the Peoples Republic of China Begin participation in the system*

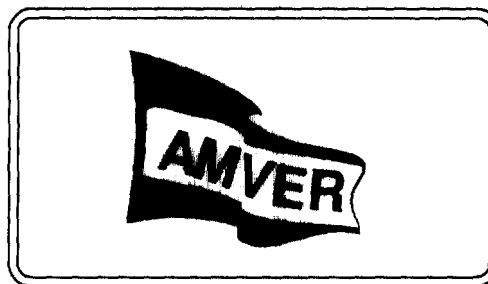
— *Like the fabled character who cried, "Wolf! Wolf!" too many times, GMDSS false alarms could jeopardize prompt search and rescue response.*

— *Six AMVER ships converged on the burning Cruise Ship Achille Lauro to remove 504 of the 976 passengers and crew. The Log Book of the first ship on scene tells of the dramatic rescue.*

— *The development of new licensing requirements for GMDSS Operators.*

Pass This Issue On To A Friend!

The AMVER BULLETIN sends best wishes to our long - time participants and expresses a hearty "Welcome Aboard" to our new members.



— The Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue system has been in operation since 1958. It initially started as a search and rescue tool for vessels in the North Atlantic. Presently, AMVER is the only world wide safety network of its kind, dedicated to safeguarding the ships from more than 130 nations, in every ocean of the world.

— AMVER participation is free, voluntary and available to ships of all nations. In this time of budget cut-backs and down-sizing, AMVER is a most cost effective and efficient search and rescue tool. AMVER is fully endorsed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and is available to the world's cruise and merchant shipping communities. Remember, **ALL** ships of **ALL** flags are welcome to participate.

— Maximum participation is the key to AMVER's effective support of search and rescue around the world. The more ships enrolled in the system, naturally, the better the chances of emergency assistance being dispatched to those in distress on the world's oceans.

— If you have any questions or comments about the AMVER safety network, give us a call at our New York Office at 212-668-7762/64 between the working hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM (Eastern Standard Time), or send us a fax at 212-668-7684. We're here to help!

AMVER

BULLETIN

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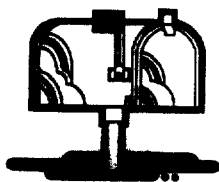
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The AMVER Bulletin is published quarterly by AMVER Maritime Relations, Commandant (G-NRS-3/AMR), U.S. Coast Guard, Governors Island, New York, N.Y. 10004-5034, U.S.A. Subscription requests, notifications of change-of-address and photos and articles should be sent to the above address. AMVER Bulletin subscriptions are offered free of charge. The AMVER system is a maritime, emergency mutual assistance service provided by the U.S. Coast Guard. The system provides state-of-the-art technology to search and rescue efforts world-wide. Merchant vessels of all nations making offshore passage of more than 24 hours are encouraged to dispatch periodic messages to the AMVER Center. When filed through any of several cooperating radio stations (see AMVER communications charts in any AMVER Bulletin), there is no cost for these messages. A computer generates and maintains a vessel's position throughout its voyage if it is an AMVER participant. Projected locations and relevant characteristics of all (AMVER participating) vessels known to be in a given area are furnished to recognized SAR agencies of any nation only during a bonafide emergency. Vessels' projected locations are disclosed only for reasons pertaining to maritime safety. AMVER participation is free and strictly voluntary. Participation benefits include, but are not limited to: improved likelihood of rapid aid during emergencies; reduced number of calls for assistance to vessels unfavorably located; reduced response time for vessels going to the aid of fellow mariners. An AMVER participant has no more an obligation to render emergency assistance than does a non-participant. Details of the AMVER system operations are also available from AMVER Maritime Relations, Commandant (G-NRS-3/AMR), U.S. Coast Guard, Bldg. 110 Box 26, Governors Island N.Y., N.Y. 10004-5034, and Commander, Pacific Area (POC), Coast Guard Island, Alameda, Ca. 94501-5100. AMVER instructions are currently published in English, available at Coast Guard Marine Inspection Offices in principal U.S. coastal ports. Japanese, Simplified Chinese, Greek, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Swedish User's Manuals are available upon request.



ATTENTION! VHF CHANNEL 70 IS NOT A PARTY LINE!

We received a letter from a Radio Officer who has experienced numerous false alerts and non-emergency comms on a radio channel intended for emergency use only.

Dear Editor,

I have just read your issue no. 1 - 95 and would like to comment regarding certain operations of GMDSS.

During our maiden voyage from Europe to the United States and then on to the Far East, we received a lot of distress alerts on VHF/DSC and HF/DSC. Unfortunately it was hard for us to identify the vessel and the coast station relaying the distress alert. We were receiving their MMSI number only and no publication onboard could identify them.

One day before our arrival in Singapore, we were bombarded (five times or more) with a distress alert call on both VHF Ch. 70 and MF 2187.5 Khz. The position was determined to be at the heart of Singapore.

Is there any regulation concerning the testing of equipment while the vessel is in port or shipyards? If this false alert situation will not be regulated, then there will come a time that the officer on duty will certainly ignore and cancel this distress alert believing it is only a false alert.

I also monitored two Greek ships talking for half an hour on VHF Channel 70. Can you please emphasize that VHF channel 70 is not allowed for any form of communication except DSC distress, emergency and safety alert calls only.

Thank you very much and more power to AMVER.

Very Truly Yours,
Carlos E. Aguilar
Radio Officer
M/T "Bow Flower"

Carlos:

Your concerns are addressed in the article on GMDSS which follows in this issue. You are not alone!

— Editor

He also worries about GMDSS!

Dear Editor,

This is my first time in corresponding with your esteemed humanitarian organization. I should have written to you sooner than this, considering the date of the issue of the AMVER BULLETIN I read (Issue 1 - 95). I just happened to be lucky this morning to have come across this issue today on board my vessel. So here goes!

After carefully reading the letter written by Mr. Jim Warren, R/O SS LNG LEO/WDZB and your short rejoinder, I am afraid to say that you have missed the point of the whole matter.

If I may say so, Mr. Warren's letter is stressing the manning of a Radio Station on board a merchant ship especially prior to the implementation of GMDSS (FEB 1999). The SS LNG LEO did not receive the VHF-16 Urgency message from the M/V DASA TUJUH/YEEW; neither did she receive it from KAOHSIUNG Radio/XSW, but only

via Radiotelegraphy 500 Khz.

Your response stating the regulation for monitoring VHF-16 is important, but doesn't answer Mr. Warren's query. I am sure the SS LNG LEO was listening to VHF-16 but did not receive anything from M/V DASA TUJUH/YEEW. In a real distress like this, she might have used VHF-16. That proves how weak VHF signals are compared to the 500Khz manned by professional radiomen.

It is sad to note that with almost four years to go for the complete implementation of GMDSS, the more affluent nations are stopping the use of 500 Khz transmission, thereby psychologically encouraging the ships with the professional radio officers on board to keep less strict watch on the 500 Khz. This situation is dangerous, Mr. Editor!

It is noteworthy to state that I have also been able to help rescue other stricken seamen on three occasions by means of the Auto-Alarm (500 Khz) back in 1986, 1989, and 1991. I have yet to witness my ship go to the rescue initiated by means of an EPIRB, satellite or other advanced technological device.

Sincerely yours
James Kingley Armah
(R/O) — MT NEPTUNE PHOENIX

Jim:

The debate over implementation of GMDSS rages on. Without taking sides on the issue, from our vantage point at AMVER, we have seen a number of successful rescues initiated by the new technology. It has its problems, but it's here to stay! Suggest you join Carlos in reading the article on false alarms.

— Editor

Dear Editor,

I am writing to present comments, observations and constructive criticism regarding the GMDSS. First, I would like to state that I am not making these statements to resist the implementation of GMDSS. It is clear that this system (or one like it) is here to stay. However, there are significant problems and areas of concern that require review and consideration.

I am the REO on the military contracted, civilian man PrePositioned Force vessel M/V Cape Horn/KMJS at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. The items of individual GMDSS equipment on our vessel are state of the art; however, there are problems. Among them:

a. The software for both the HF SITOR and Inmarsat - C communications contain bugs. To date none of these bugs is major, just bothersome. This raises the question - are the sections of the software dealing with SOS transmission bug free? Since we can not effectively test this without sending an actual distress message that ques-

"...it is highly naive to place in the ship owners' hands the responsibility of ensuring the correct functioning of the GMDSS equipment prior to each sailing."

tion can not be answered.

b. The HF SITOR and Inmarsat - C terminals are software controlled from laptop computers. The screens on these computers are very difficult to see, especially at night.

c. When the laptop computers are opened the screen obscures, from the sitting position, some of the status lights and controls.

d. I'm sure you are already aware of the excessive false alarms on the units. I have experienced as many as 57 false alarms in a week. The unit is now turned off and likely to stay that way.

e. Large areas of the globe, especially in the southern hemisphere and around third world countries, do not yet provide NAVTEX data and information.

f. The Mates are highly resistive to learning this system and being responsible for the monitoring of its status. They view, and rightly so, that with the trend for single person bridges and the increasing sophistication of bridge equipment, the additional requirements placed on them by GMDSS will be distracting and dangerous.

g. On many vessels I have been on the NAVTEX receiver/printer is simply turned off. This is mainly due to the excessive amount of printouts received where NAVTEX coverage is provided and overlaps other NAVTEX areas. The mates simply do not have time to sift through all the data.

h. At a cost of around \$60,000 to \$85,000 U.S. for one of these GMDSS systems, many vessels from third world countries will simply not spend what amounts to an entire year's wages for the entire crew for one of these systems.

i. I believe it is highly naive to place in the ship owners hands the responsibility for ensuring the correct functioning of the GMDSS equipment prior to each sailing. The Captains of all American vessels I have sailed on have all been men of high character; however, the pressure on these individuals to adhere to strict sailing schedules is tremendous. The incentives and temptation are there to fudge the required equipment checks. It is creditable to believe a shipping company will not hold up a scheduled sailing because some component of the GMDSS is not working at thousands and thousands of dollars of cost. If this issue is not addressed, I predict equipment malfunction will only be "discovered" while at sea, and then only when the destination is a port where an immediate fix can be accomplished. No one will discover a problem at the port. This issue must be addressed with more than the hope

that they will do it, ***"Because it is the law."***

I have been an electronics technician since 1976 and only recently became a Radio Officer. It is my belief that with the trend for smaller and smaller crews (16 persons), the importance of having highly trained and motivated personnel

"...the pressure on these individuals to adhere to strict sailing schedules is tremendous. The incentives and temptation are there to fudge the required equipment checks."

increases sharply.

With the increasing requirement and reliance on shipboard electronics, the talents of a shipboard electronics technician becomes even more evident. Also, it should not be assumed that the statements of equipment reliability will prevent equipment failures at critical times.

Previous to this job I worked for the Defense Communications Agency on ultra-reliable/100% redundant equipment. It still did not prevent equipment failures and/or communications outages. Remember, even if something is 99.9% reliable, it still will not be working almost nine hours per year. A lot can happen in nine hours while underway.

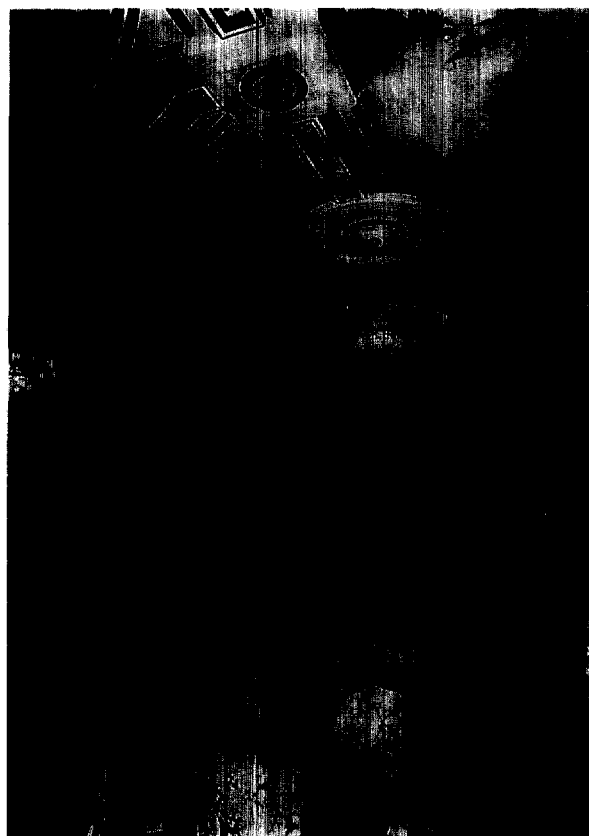
There are many pieces of electronic equipment on the bridge and in the engine room and this trend will continue. When the last of the radio watch is over, the need for an on-board technician will continue.

Vernon B. Bush
Lynn Haven, Florida USA

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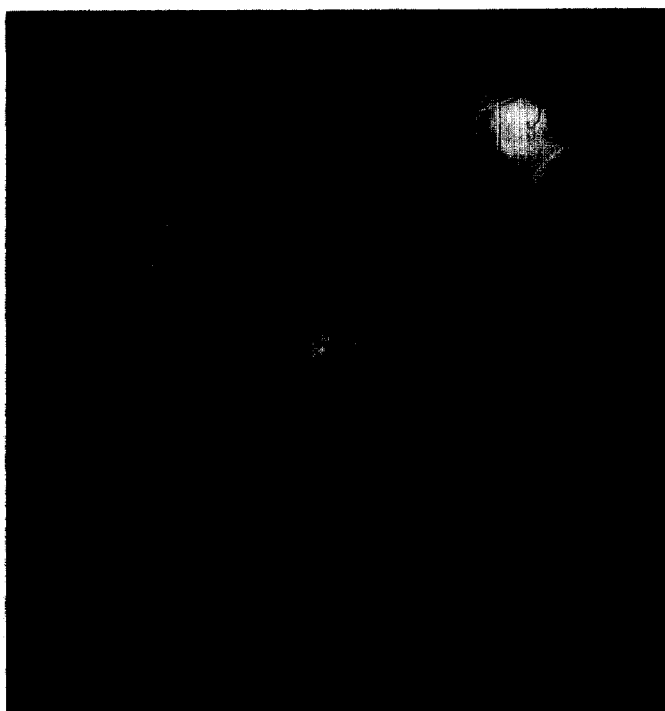
AMVER Awards presentation in Monaco:

A Royal Event!

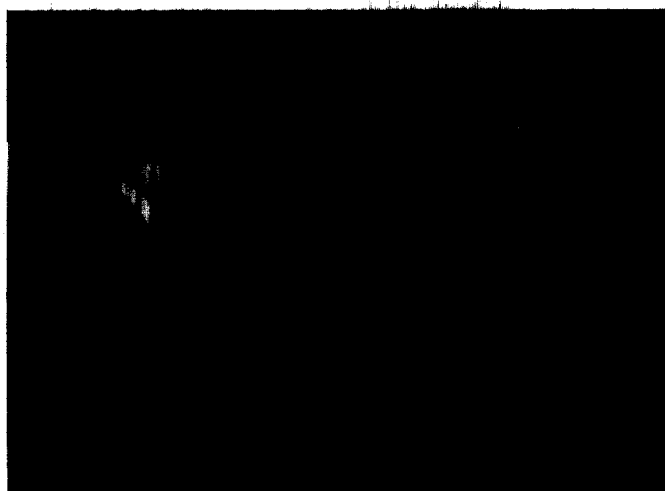


The Splendid architecture and elegance of the world renowned Le Metropole Palace Hotel served as a fitting backdrop for the first presentation of AMVER Awards by a future Head of State.

AMVER's Rick Kenney "holds court" following the ceremony as he explains AMVER to a rapt audience. From left are Conseiller Jean-Marc Filleule, au Cabinet du Ministre d'Etat, Jackson C. McDonald, U.S. Representative to the Principality, H.S.H. Prince Albert of Monaco, and VADM Kent Williams, Chief of Staff of the United States Coast Guard.



Shipping companies of Monaco, France, Spain, Italy and Switzerland were honored. One hundred and fifty three ships of 53 companies earned participation awards in 1994.



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Prince Albert congratulates Captain J.-L. Bille, Directeur Adjoint of Acomarit Services Maritimes S.A., located in Geneva, Switzerland.



Mr. Daniel San Giorgio (right), of the Direction Du Tourisme Et Des Congres which coordinated and hosted the reception following the ceremonies, stresses a point about the Principality's emergence as an influential maritime center in Europe to U.S. Representative Jackson McDonald, who is also Consul General of the U.S. Consulate in nearby Marseilles.



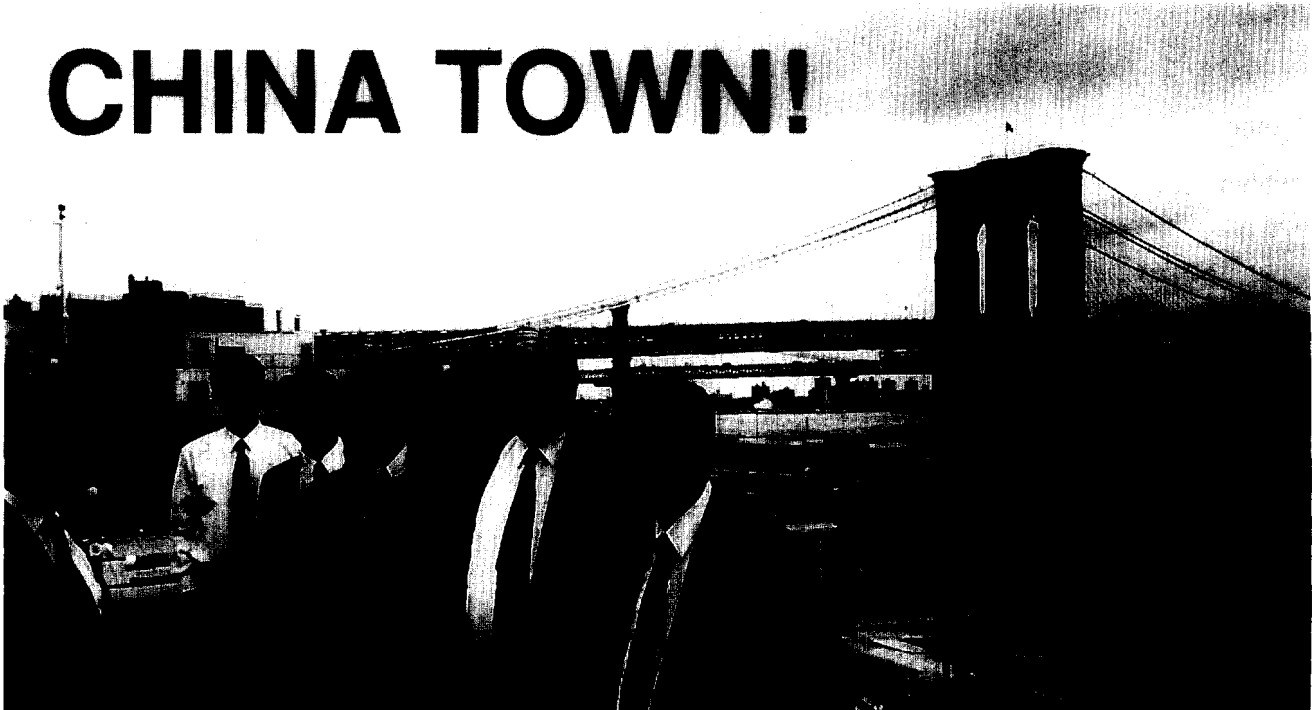
Dott. Enrico Costa, President Delegate of Prestige Cruises In Monaco, was among the attendees.



Vice Admiral Kent William, representing the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, is about to make a toast as Mrs. Williams chats with Jean-Paul Dardis, General Manager of Harbors of Monaco and Sea Affairs.

New York Hosts Distinguished AMVER Study Panel

CHINA TOWN!



CAPT Liu You Zhong and CAPT Richard Beadon (Foreground) show Chinese study group members the view of the Brooklyn Bridge from the roof of the Seamen's Church Institute.

A senior delegation of government maritime officials from the Peoples Republic of China visited the AMVER Maritime Relations Office in New York City this summer. The purpose of the visit was to gather and exchange technical information, with particular attention to maritime communications and search and rescue matters. The goal of the visit was to provide an integrated presentation of the broad spectrum of organizations, services and products which together comprise an effective American merchant marine industry, while enriching mutual understanding of Sino-American cultural diversity.

CAPT Liu You Zhong, an American citizen who is a retired China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) ship's master and former Director, Marine and Terminal Operations with COSCO North America in Secaucus, New Jersey, accompanied the group and provided technical interpretation.

Welcome to New York...



Chinese officials stop for a photo upon arrival at the AMVER Maritime Relations Office, located on Governors Island. From left - Messrs. Song and Mo, Ms. Zeng, Mr. Xu, CAPT Liu, Team leader Mr. Mao and Mr. Han.